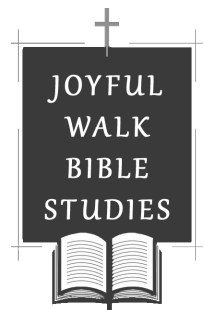


The
GOD-DEPENDENT
Woman

Life Choices from Second Corinthians

Learn to rely on God in weakness and in strength

MELANIE NEWTON



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Using This Study Guide

This study guide consists of 11 lessons covering Paul’s letter we know as “Second Corinthians.” Since this letter consists of 13 chapters in our New Testaments, we will need to cover more than one chapter in some of the lessons. If you cannot do the entire lesson one week, please read the Bible passage covered by the lesson and try to do the “Day One Study” of the lesson.

THE BASIC STUDY

Each lesson includes core questions covering the passage narrative. These core questions will take you through the process of inductive Bible study—observation, interpretation, and application. It is the best approach for doing Bible Study. The process is more easily understood in the context of answering these questions:

- What does the Bible say? (*Observation: what’s in the text*)
- What does it mean? (*Interpretation: the author’s intended meaning*)
- How does this apply to me today? (*Application: making it personal*)

STUDY ENHANCEMENTS

*Dependent Living**: The focus of this study is choices we make to rely more on God than on ourselves in weakness and in strength. That is called dependent living, meaning we live in daily dependence upon God. Some questions have a DL* in front of them. These will prompt you to recognize what it means to live dependently on God and how to apply it to your life.

Study Aids: To aid in proper interpretation and application of the study, additional study aids are located where appropriate in the lesson:

- Historical Insights
- Scriptural Insights
- From the Greek (definitions of Greek words)
- Focus on the Meaning
- Think About It (thoughtful reflection)

Other useful study tools: Use online tools or apps (blueletterbible.org or “Blue Letter Bible app” is especially helpful) to find *cross references* (verses with similar content to what you are studying) and meanings of the *original Greek words or phrases* used (usually called “interlinear”). You can also look at any verse in *various Bible translations* to help with understanding what it is saying. You will have the opportunity to add your own study at the end of every **What does it mean?** section.

PODCASTS

Find podcasts coordinating with these lessons at melanienewton.com/podcasts and most other podcast channels. Follow along with the “Podcast Listener Guides” for each lesson.

NEW TESTAMENT SUMMARY

The New Testament opens with the births of Jesus and John (often called “the baptist”). About 30 years later, John challenged the Jews to indicate their repentance (turning from sin and toward God) by submitting to water baptism—a familiar Old Testament practice used for repentance as well as when a Gentile converted to Judaism (to be washed clean of idolatry).

Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Son, publicly showed the world what God is like and taught His perfect ways for 3 – 3½ years. After preparing 12 disciples to continue Christ's earthly work, He died voluntarily on a cross for mankind's sin, rose from the dead, and returned to heaven. The account of His earthly life is recorded in 4 books known as the Gospels (the biblical books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John named after the compiler of each account).

After Jesus's return to heaven, the followers of Christ were then empowered by the Holy Spirit and spread God's salvation message among the Jews, a number of whom believed in Christ. The apostle Paul and others traveling with him carried the good news to the Gentiles during 3 missionary journeys (much of this recorded in the book of Acts). Paul wrote 13 New Testament letters to churches & individuals (Romans through Philemon). The section in our Bible from Hebrews to Jude contains 8 additional letters penned by five men, including two apostles (Peter and John) and two of Jesus's half-brothers (James and Jude). The author of Hebrews is unknown. The apostle John also recorded Revelation, which summarizes God's final program for the world. The Bible ends as it began—with a new, sinless creation.

DISCUSSION GROUP GUIDELINES

1. **Attend consistently** whether your lesson is done or not. You'll learn from the other women, and they want to get to know you.
2. **Set aside time** to work through the study questions. The goal of Bible study is to **get to know** Jesus. He will change your life.
3. **Share your insights** from your personal study time. As you spend time in the Bible, Jesus will teach you truth through His Spirit inside you.
4. **Respect each other's insights.** Listen thoughtfully. Encourage each other as you interact. Refrain from dominating the discussion if you have a tendency to be talkative. 😊
5. **Celebrate our unity** in Christ. Avoid bringing up controversial subjects such as politics, divisive issues, and denominational differences.
6. **Maintain confidentiality.** Remember that anything shared during the group time is not to leave the **group** (unless permission is granted by the one sharing).
7. **Pray for one another** as sisters in Christ.
8. **Get to know the women** in your group. Please do not use your small group members for solicitation purposes for home businesses, though.

Enjoy your Joyful Walk Bible Study!

Recommended: Listen to the podcast “The Call to Dependent Living” at melanienevton.com/podcasts as an introduction to the whole study.

The Call to Dependent Living

The main emphasis of the book of 2 Corinthians is that we, as believers in Christ, should live our lives dependent on Him all the time in our strengths and in our weaknesses.

ABOUT PAUL

- The Corinthians knew Paul as being well-educated, a tent-making craftsman, determined, bold, convinced of the truth of Christ, and very committed to Jesus’ calling on his life. He was a gifted teacher and loved God’s people almost as much as he loved God Himself.
- Five years had passed from the time of the beginning of the church in Corinth until the time of Paul writing this letter. Based upon scriptural references, second Corinthians is Paul’s fourth letter to the church at Corinth. The Holy Spirit only preserved two for us—First and Second Corinthians.
- To gain perspective on Paul’s relationship with the Corinthians, think back over the last five years of your relationship with a group of people that don’t live near you but you visit occasionally and with whom you may have a rough relationship. What was that relationship like five years ago? What is it like now? What were your visits with them like? How did you hear about them between visits? What makes the relationship rough?

THE TRUTH ABOUT BECOMING GOD-DEPENDENT IN OUR MESSY LIVES

- This letter we know as 2 Corinthians is one of Paul’s most personal letters. It’s not a “sermon” like Romans or Ephesians that can be easily outlined. It’s a messy letter, just like most personal letters. It is full of personal feelings and experiences interspersed between some terrific teaching. It’s like life—messy—because people are messy, relationships are messy, circumstances are messy, and community within the church is messy.
- God wants for us women to be God-dependent women. Not “independent except for when we need Him.” But, we are to be God-dependent. All. The. Time.
- But, being God-dependent all the time is so radically different from what our culture teaches. If you have been reared in western culture, this is contrary to what you’ve been taught most of your life. It is opposite of self-reliance as the way to be a strong, effective woman.
- Are we as Christian women supposed to stay like babies not doing anything for ourselves? No! We are supposed to grow and mature in our thinking and behavior.

- Are we as Christian women supposed to just lie back and let anything happen to us? No! That's not what it means. The New Testament teaches Christians to be wise and proactive in our dealings with everyone—whether in the church or outside of it—for our own good as well as for the good of others.
- Are we not supposed to use our skills, talents, advantages, and opportunities to be the best women we can be? No! That's not what it means. God wants us to give back to Him all the skills, talents, advantages, and opportunities He has given to us and use them for His glory. That involves following His leading and guidance. Sometimes, our strength can be our greatest hindrance. We tend to rely on that rather than on God. So, relying on God means submitting your strengths and your weaknesses to Him for His purposes in your life.

DEPENDENT LIVING IS THE KEY TO BECOMING A GOD-DEPENDENT WOMAN

Human parents raise their children to be less dependent on them and more independent of them. But, God raises His children to be less independent and more dependent on Him.

- The key to being a God-dependent woman is what can be described as dependent living. Whatever He brings into our lives that makes us more dependent upon Him is good for us.
- Dependent living is not weakness. It is being stronger and having more influence, success, and satisfaction than you could ever have through your own efforts—as brilliant and self-sufficient as you think you are or as weak and messed up as you think you are and everywhere in-between.
- Through this 11-week study of 2 Corinthians, we will learn how to make plans for our lives and rely on the Lord with how to proceed. We will learn how to educate our minds and rely on the Lord to use that knowledge to glorify Him. We will learn how to make money and rely on the Lord to show us how to use it wisely. We learn how to do this as we act in obedience to the Word of God, depend on Jesus Christ for the power to do so, and trust Him with the results. This “dependent living” will make us stronger and more effective in life than we could ever be on our own.
- There is great value for every woman to study this messy, hard to read letter we call Second Corinthians—parent, teacher, mentor to teens and young adults, and every woman wanting a closer relationship with Christ.
- You can have confidence in what the Lord Jesus Christ will do in your life so that you will want to depend on Him more than on yourself. As you submit to Him, our God will transform you into a God-dependent woman who lives dependently on Him in weakness and in strength. Nothing could be better!

*Let Jesus satisfy your heart with confidence that you can depend on Him.
Then, live each day as a God-dependent woman!*

1: The God on Whom We Can Rely

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. (2 Corinthians 1:9b, Memory Verse #1)

DAY ONE STUDY

The ABCs of 2nd Corinthians—Author, Background, and Context

Like any book you read, it always helps to know a bit about the author, the background setting for the story (i.e., past, present, future), and where the book fits into a series (that's the context). The same is true of Bible books.

AUTHOR

Paul identifies himself as the author of this letter written to the church at Corinth. Paul, whose Hebrew name was Saul, was born in Tarsus, a major Roman city on the coast of southeast Asia Minor. Tarsus was the center for the tent making industry. Paul was trained in that craft as his occupation (his primary paying profession). As a Jewish Pharisee from the tribe of Benjamin, Paul was educated at the feet of Gamaliel, a well-respected rabbi of the day. Paul was an ardent persecutor of the early church until his life-changing conversion to Christianity

After believing in Jesus Christ as his Savior, Paul was called by God to take the gospel to the Gentiles. This was an amazing about-face for a committed Pharisee like Paul who ordinarily would have nothing to do with Gentiles. Paul wrote 13 letters that are included in the New Testament. Tradition has it that Paul was beheaded shortly after he wrote 2nd Timothy in 67 AD. (*The above information comes from Acts 8:3; 9:1-31; 22:3-5; 26:9-11; and Galatians 1:11-24.*)

BACKGROUND

Around 44 B.C., Julius Caesar rebuilt Corinth from a pile of rubble into a great Roman capital city. So, it was relatively young by the time of Paul without aristocracy, traditions, or well-established citizens. As a Roman colony and the capital of the province of Achaia, the people who called Corinth home were mostly retired Roman soldiers, merchants (many of whom were Jews) and other immigrants from the East. Corinth's strategic location brought commerce and all that goes with it: wealth, a steady stream of travelers and merchants, and vice (including prostitution as part of the worship of their local gods and goddesses). Corinthians had a reputation for wealth and sensuality.

As we read Acts and Paul's letters to the Corinthians, we can piece together a lot of the background information for this letter. On his second missionary journey, Paul spent a year and a half in Corinth (A.D. 51-52). Then, Paul went to Ephesus on his third missionary journey and made that city his base of operations for almost three years (A.D. 53-56). There he heard disturbing news about immorality in the Corinthian church. So, he wrote a letter urging the believers not to tolerate such conduct in their midst. Paul referred to this previous letter in 1 Corinthians 5:9. It has not been preserved.

After this, Paul heard from "Chloe's people" that factions had developed in the church. He also received a letter from the church in Corinth requesting his guidance on certain matters. Those who carried this letter also reported other disturbing conditions in the church. These factors led Paul to compose another letter, the one we call "1 Corinthians," in which he dealt with the questions and

problems, promised to visit them soon, and said he was sending Timothy to Corinth. Paul sent this letter from Ephesus by trusted messengers in the late winter or early spring of A.D. 55.

There was internal strife in the Corinthian church. But, the larger problem seems to have been that some in the community were leading the church into a view of things that was contrary to that which Paul taught them. This resulted in a questioning of Paul's authority and his gospel.

While the letter we know as "1 Corinthians" did not dispel the problems in the church at Corinth completely, it resolved some of them. Yet, opposition to the Apostle Paul persisted. Paul's critics continued to speak out against him in the church, claiming equal authority with Paul and questioning whether Paul was really an apostle. The Christians in Corinth didn't argue with what he had written; they simply denied his right to tell them what to do.

News of continuing problems in Corinth reached Paul in Ephesus so he made a brief visit to Corinth. What he called "a painful visit," his efforts to resolve the conflicts proved unsuccessful. He then returned to Ephesus and sent a "severe letter" from Ephesus carried by Titus and another unnamed believer. This letter has not been preserved.

While waiting to receive the report back from Titus' visit, persecution made Paul leave Ephesus earlier than he had anticipated. He found an open door for the gospel to the north in Troas. Eager to meet Titus, who was taking the land route from Corinth back to Ephesus, Paul moved west into Macedonia. There Titus met him and gave him an encouraging report. Most of the church had responded to Paul's directives, and the church had disciplined the troublemakers. Unfortunately, some in the congregation still refused to acknowledge Paul's authority over them.

Paul wrote what we know as "2 Corinthians" from Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, or Berea) probably in the fall or winter of A.D. 56. (*The above information adapted from Dr. Constable's Notes on 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians, 2018 Editions*)

CONTEXT

Though found in our New Testaments after the book of Romans, Paul wrote 1 Corinthians (from Ephesus) and 2 Corinthians (from Macedonia) before he wrote Romans during his stay in Corinth.

Historical Insight: Trying to piece together this section of Paul's life and ministry is like assembling a picture puzzle without the box-top. The big pieces are easy, but the small ones drive you crazy! (Steve Hixon, *The New Covenant Lifestyle*, p. 3)

Here is a possible timeline:

Paul's founding visit Spring 51	Paul's first letter <i>1 Cor. 5:9</i>	The Corinthians' letter to Paul <i>1 Cor. 1:11; 7:1; 16:17</i>	First Corinthians Spring 55	The "painful visit" <i>2 Cor. 2:1</i> Summer/Fall 55	Paul's "severe letter" <i>2 Cor. 2:4</i>	Titus brings news <i>2 Cor. 2:13; 7:5-7</i>	Second Corinthians <i>2 Cor. 2:4</i> Fall 56	Paul's next visit <i>Acts 20:3</i> Winter 56/57
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1. What grabbed your attention as you read the ABC's of the book of 2 Corinthians?

The God-Dependent Woman and Dependent Living

This letter, 2 Corinthians, is considered one of Paul’s most personal letters. It’s not a “sermon” like Romans or Ephesians that can be easily outlined. It’s a messy letter, just like most personal letters. It is full of personal feelings and experiences interspersed between some terrific teaching. It’s like life—messy—because people are messy, relationships are messy, circumstances are messy, and community within the church is messy.

The majority of New Testament writings exist because the early church was messy ... Emerging from the mess is the fingerprint of God writing the hope of the gospel and the story of redemption. (Heather Zempel, *Community Is Messy*, pages 24, 26-27)

In the midst of our messy lives, God wants us to learn to rely on Him more than on ourselves. If you have been reared in western culture, this is contrary to what you’ve been taught most of your life. To compensate for poor teaching in the past, women are taught from girlhood to “stand on your own two feet” and “you don’t need anyone to be successful.” So, what does this relying on God look like?

Are we as Christians supposed to stay like babies not doing anything for ourselves? Does it mean we are supposed to just lie back and let anything happen to us? Does it mean we aren’t supposed to use our skills, talents, advantages, and opportunities to be the best we can be? No! That’s not what it means.

We are supposed to grow and mature in our thinking and behavior. God wants us to give to Him all the skills, talents, advantages, and opportunities and use them for His glory. That involves following His leading and guidance. It means submitting our strengths and our weaknesses to Him for His purposes in our lives.

Here is the key to this: Human parents raise their children to be less dependent on them and more independent. But, God raises His children to be *less independent* and ***more dependent on Him***. Whatever He brings into our lives that makes us more dependent upon Him is good for us. The key to being a God-dependent woman is ***dependent living***.

Throughout 2 Corinthians, we will see examples of dependent living. Paul makes plans and submits them to God to be changed. We will see him demonstrating his authority as a leader and submitting that to God. He asks for healing and submits to God’s answer. And, Paul talks about preaching the gospel in one city while his heart wants to be in another city, waiting for God to say “go.” That’s dependent living.

Dependent living is not weakness. It is being stronger and having more influence, success, and satisfaction than we could ever have through our own efforts—as brilliant and self-sufficient as we think we are or as weak and messed up as we think we are and everywhere in-between.

Through this 11-week study of 2 Corinthians, we will learn how to make plans for our lives and rely on the Lord with how to proceed. We will learn how to educate our minds and rely on the Lord to use that knowledge to glorify Him. We will learn how to make money and rely on the Lord to show us how to use it wisely. We learn how to do this as we act in obedience to the Word of God, depend on Jesus Christ for the power to do so, and trust Him with the results. This “dependent living” will make us stronger and more effective in life than we could ever be on our own.

As a reminder, you’ll see this main idea at the end of each lesson:

As His child, God transforms your life by teaching you to live dependently on Him in weakness and in strength.

The following verses describe or relate to dependent living. To help you learn about living dependently on the Lord, we recommend you memorize the verses listed below. I've included the NIV version of each, but you can use any translation. Write them on cards and place them where you will see and review them.

But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. (2 Corinthians 1:9b)

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. (2 Corinthians 4:7)

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

2. What questions do you have about "dependent living" that you hope to have answered through this study?

DAY TWO STUDY

This day will take a little longer than most because we ask you to read through the entire letter of 2 Corinthians. Reading through the whole letter is the best way to see the entire message and get the "big picture" before we divide it into smaller pieces to enjoy it more slowly.

For your convenience, the letter of 2 Corinthians is provided for you in the pages before this lesson. Or, you can read it in your own Bible.

Read the letter called "2 Corinthians" as it was intended ... a letter from one dear friend to another. Read it at one sitting. It will take about 40 minutes. Consider the following questions as you read. Ready? Go!

3. What do you remember the most from your reading of this entire letter? What topics, situations, or teachings does Paul include in his letter that particularly interest you?

Ask God to show you answers to your questions and what He wants you to learn through this study of 2 Corinthians.

DAY THREE STUDY—GET THE BIG PICTURE

Let's start digging into this wonderful letter from God to us. For every lesson, we will begin with reading the whole passage to get the big picture before we study the verses more closely.

Ask the Lord Jesus to teach you through His Word. (*This is a dependent living choice.)

Read the Bible passage below (NIV). Use your own method (colored pencils, lines, shapes) to mark 1) anything that grabs your attention and 2) words you want to understand. Feel free to develop your own method of marking up a passage. ☺ Put a star * next to anything you think relates to dependent living. I've shown you one examples (v. 4).

1 *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,*

To the church of God in Corinth, together with all his holy people throughout Achaia:

2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. 5 For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. 6 If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. 7 And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.*

8 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. 9 Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. 10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, 11 as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

4. What grabbed your attention from this passage?

- vv. 1-3

- vv. 3-7

- vv. 8-11

5. What verses or specific words do you want to understand better?

6. What verses illustrate or help you understand what dependent living on God looks like?

Example: We receive comfort from God for ourselves and to comfort others. (v. 4)

What does the Bible say? (This is the “Observation” step in the process of Bible Study.)

7. Focus on vv. 1-2. This is called the “salutation.” In ancient letters, the salutation included both the letter writer and the recipient’s name.

The letter is from Paul. What are his credentials?

Who is with Paul?

Who are the recipients?

- ✓ How does Paul begin his greeting?

Historical Insight: Paul intended that the Corinthian Christians would read this epistle in the church, but he also wanted all the Christians in the province of Achaia to read it. We know that at this time there was another church a few miles away in Cenchrrea (Romans 16:1), and perhaps one in nearby Athens (Acts 17:34). (*Dr. Constable’s Notes on 2 Corinthians 2017 Edition*, p. 10)

What does it mean? (This is the “Interpretation” step in the process of Bible Study.)

8. Read 1 Corinthians 1:26. What does Paul say about the Corinthians that might help you to identify with them?

9. Read the following verses to compare Paul’s salutations in other letters. Galatians 1:1-3 (Paul’s first letter); 1 Corinthians 1:1-3 (written before 2 Corinthians); Romans 1:1, 7-8 (written after 2 Corinthians) and Ephesians 1:1-2 (one of Paul’s last letters). What is consistently the same?

Focus on the Meaning: “Grace” was a common Greek salutation that meant “greetings” or “rejoice.” The Jews said “shalom” to each other, meaning “peace and prosperity.” Paul used both words when he greeted the recipients of his epistles. For the Christian, these terms took on a deeper meaning. God has chosen to set His love upon the believer in Christ (grace) resulting in something that the world cannot give (peace).

What application will you make? (This is the “Application” step in the process of Bible Study.)

10. Being confident in the authenticity of what you read in the Bible is important to your faith. How would the consistency you found in the previous question help to prove the authenticity of those letters? By the way, skeptics concede that Paul wrote 2 Corinthians. No argument about it.

DAY FOUR STUDY

Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-11. Ask the Lord Jesus to teach you through His Word.

What does the Bible say?

11. Let God feed your hope through the truths revealed in this passage.

Praise be to _____,
the Father of _____ and the God of
_____ (v. 3).

When God comforts us, what can we do (v. 4)?

What abounds in / overflows into our lives (v. 5)?

What does sharing someone else’s sufferings and comfort from God produce in us (v. 6)?

Where did Paul and his friends suffer hardships (v. 8)?

How did they feel during that time (vv. 8-9)?

What purpose did they see in their sufferings (v. 9)?

What did God do that feeds their hope (v. 10)?

Who will benefit from the prayers of the Corinthians (v. 11)?

Did anything else grab your attention?

What does it mean?

12. Paul describes God as “the Father of compassion” (v. 3) and “the God of **all** comfort,” the one to whom we should go first in our troubles. Compassion means to not just feel sympathy for someone’s pain but to do something to alleviate it. Paul equates this with receiving “comfort” from God.

- Define the verb “comfort.”
- How does our God of compassion comfort us? Consider all the ways that He uses to do so.

Scriptural Insight: God is not detached, cold and distant. He knows, understands, empathizes with and responds to the pain in our lives with compassion. This is beautifully illustrated in the life of Jesus (see Mark 6:34).

13. What did Paul mean when he said we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ (v. 5)? Think of the human experiences that we share with Jesus.

14. Paul wrote this letter after experiencing severe trials in Ephesus (vv. 8-9). Read Acts 19:23-41 and 1 Corinthians 15:32. What did he experience?

Although the context of Paul's "sufferings" may be persecution, the principle applies to any troubles experienced by humans. Jesus experienced them all except those brought on by personal sinfulness since He was sinless. But, He understands our need for comfort even then.

15. Paul admitted weakness. Being a mature Christian doesn't exempt you from fear, struggle, doubt, stress and suffering. Paul viewed those experiences as opportunities for learning to rely on God more than oneself (v. 9).

- What does it mean to rely on or trust someone?

- What choices must you make to rely on God more than on yourself?

16. When you have trouble in your life, someone might tell you this, "God doesn't give you more than you can handle." Based upon what you read in vv. 8-9, why is that a false teaching?

Think About It: God allows painful things to happen to His children. He puts us in situations where it's beyond our ability. We are still capable of sinning. We can't fully trust ourselves. He gives us more than we can handle on our own so we are forced to trust in Him.

17. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. What does God promise regarding any temptation to sin that you face at any time? How is this also teaching you to rely on God more than yourself?

From the Greek: "Gracious favor" NIV / "blessing" ESV (v. 11) comes from the Greek word *charisma* meaning "a favor with which one receives without any merit of his own." This undeserved gift of divine grace towards us stems from God's love for us. God chooses to give it because of His love so that men and women can become acceptable to Him. Grace is summed up in the name, person, and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. We receive this favor or acceptance from God as a free gift through faith. God's grace is all-sufficient, and our weakness is precisely the opportunity for His power to be displayed.

Did you see something else in this passage that you wanted to study more? This is where you would use an online tool or app (blueletterbible.org or “Blue Letter Bible app” is especially helpful) to find *cross references* (verses with similar content to what you are studying) and meanings of the *original Greek words or phrases* used (usually called “interlinear”). You can also look at any verse in *various Bible translations* to help with understanding what it is saying. These tools help you get a clearer picture of the meaning of a passage after you have studied it for yourself. You will have the opportunity to add your own study at the end of every ***What does it mean?*** section.

18. What else did you learn as you studied 2 Corinthians 1:3-11?

What application will you make?

19. If you consider that God’s purpose in allowing troubles in your life is to lead you to rely on Him more than yourself (v. 9):

- How do you recognize when you are relying on yourself?

- How resistant are you to giving up control? Do you want to learn to give up control?

- What would be the benefits of relying on God more than yourself?

Think About It: Suffering drives us to dependence on God. We set our hope on Him more than ourselves. We see His love and grace given to us. We give thanks.

20. Read vv. 4, 6-7 again. God has purpose even for our pain.

- What does v. 4 say in “The Message” translation?

- Have you considered how your struggles can lead to helping someone else? Explain this in your own words using an example from a real-life relationship.

21. In what other ways can you apply this lesson to your life?
22. Review the passage for this lesson in “Day One Study.” Add reasons why God wants us to depend on Him more than on ourselves to the chart below. I’ve given a few prompts.

Verse(s)	Reasons why God wants us to depend on Him more than on ourselves
v. 4	<i>We receive comfort from God for ourselves and to comfort others.</i>
v. 9	<i>He’s more powerful than we are.</i>
v. 10	
v. 11	

Think About It: Every daily lesson in this study begins and ends with prayer. Prayer is conversation with Someone who loves you dearly. It is not about magic words or formulas. God speaks to you through His word. You may respond to Him about anything and ask Him to make His word true in your life. Lack of prayer is often a sign of self-sufficiency rather than dependent living.

Respond to the Lord about what He’s shown you today.

As His child, God transforms your life by teaching you to live dependently on Him in weakness and in strength.

Recommended: Listen to “Confidence in God Encourages Dependence on Him” at melaniemilton.com/podcasts after doing this lesson to reinforce what you have learned. Use the listener guide on the next page.

Confidence in God Encourages Dependence on Him

PRAISE GOD FOR HIS COMFORT

- Paul describes God as “the Father of compassion” (v. 3) and “the God of **all** comfort,” the one to whom we should go first in our troubles. Compassion means to not just feel sympathy for someone’s pain but to do something to alleviate it. To comfort means “to give strength, to console, and to aid.” That’s what God does for us. He gives us strength to sustain us through the pain of life on earth.
- The most wonderful thing is knowing that our Lord Jesus Christ experienced this fallen world just like we do. He totally understands every suffering you and I experience. Because He was 100% human as well as 100% God, He knows exactly how to comfort us and sustain us through our pain.
- Most of the time God uses His Word to comfort us. You know how some verses just jump out at you when you are needing comfort.
- God comforts us through people He sends our way. Many people have stories of how God sent someone to them to give comfort during a time of grief.
- God comforts us through the prayers of other believers. Our prayers don’t change God’s purposes for us (Philippians 2:13). But, knowing that others are praying for us gives us strength to endure the pain. When they hear how God has answered their prayer, they receive God’s comfort as well. It’s partnership with God to desire His purposes to be fulfilled. And, God answers our prayers out of His graciousness. *2 Corinthians 1:10-11*
- God comforts us through unexpected events.
- God comforts us from the inside through His Holy Spirit who pours out God’s love on us. We can have confidence in His presence with us. We never go through pain alone.

GOD’S COMFORT DOES NOT ALWAYS MEAN DELIVERANCE FROM PAIN.

- God wants for us women to be God-dependent women. The key to being a God-dependent woman is what can be described as dependent living. It’s relying on His power to get us through all of life—whether we are strong and everything is going well or whether we are in pain and weakness and in dire need of relief. Whatever God brings into our lives that makes us more dependent upon Him is good for us. That’s how we learn dependent living.
- But, the world and even other Christians will try to tell us that God doesn’t want you to suffer and that we have been delivered from all suffering by our benevolent God. If you are suffering, you must have done something wrong so that God is disciplining you. Get right with God, and all your troubles will go away.

- That is not biblical! You see it throughout the book of Acts. You see it throughout all of Paul's letters. You see it throughout the other New Testament writings. God allows His children to undergo very hard things. The purpose is to teach us to trust Him with all of us, not just bits of us.
- So, every week, I am going to evaluate a popular saying that especially floats around on social media.

DOES GOD NOT GIVE YOU MORE THAN YOU CAN HANDLE?

True or False? "God doesn't give you more than you can handle." **FALSE**

"We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead." (2 Corinthians 1:8-9).

God gives everyone—you and me and your neighbor—more than they can handle on their own in order to drive us to Him. To rely on Him. To gain the confidence in Him so that we will depend on Him more. Life is hard, but God is good. Don't panic! Trust in the one who has the power to raise the dead.

REASONS WHY GOD WANTS US TO DEPEND ON HIM MORE THAN ON OURSELVES

In every podcast, we'll also cover some reasons from our lesson why God wants us to depend on Him more than on ourselves. From lesson one, we get these reasons.

- ✓ We receive comfort from God for ourselves and to comfort others. (1:4)
- ✓ He's more powerful than we are. (1:9)
- ✓ We can set our hope on Him to continue to deliver us. (1:10)
- ✓ God answers our prayers out of His graciousness. (1:11)

*Let Jesus satisfy your heart with confidence that you can depend on Him.
Then, live each day as a God-dependent woman!*